**The Great Gatsby**

**Chapter 1: 7 – 25**

* **N refers to Gatsby**
* **N moving East – dinner with Tom and Daisy Buchanan – Tom has mistress**
* **Jordan Baker – 1st sees Gatsby**

7 – 8 1st P N Nick Carraway: based on father’s advice – listens without judgement so many confided. On return from war, wanted no more confidences. Except for Gatsby: his ‘responsiveness.. an extraordinary gift for hope’

8 – 22 N’s history: 1922, after WW1, ‘came East’, learn bond business. House (‘eyesore’) at less fashionable West Egg – geography of Long Island Sound. Next to Gatsby mansion

(12) visit East Egg 1st cousin Daisy married Tom Buchanan. 2 women inside: Daisy and Miss Baker (3 yr old daughter). P16: Daisy hears name ‘Gatsby’. Tom: *Rise of the Coloured Empires*. Phone call: Miss Baker eavesdrop: ‘some woman in NY’. Daisy talks with N: ‘cynical’, daughter be ‘a beautiful fool’

22 – 25 inside, woman known as Jordan Baker (golfer). Gossip about N being engaged. Drive home: see Gatsby outside in dark. Look at green light on dock

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Story already taken place – through filter of time. Imperative that readers trust N. Suggests is older, wiser. Impression: at least from middle class family, sense of moral justice. Key theme: wealth. East / West Egg – old – new money

Visit: luxury, Tom harsh, powerful, has rank and privilege, inbred superiority

2 women dreamlike setting – unable deal with reality, pampered, superficial. Conversation inconsequential.

Theme: social expectation, appearances, rift between who or what one is and who or what society wishes or expects. Nick ‘confused and a little disgusted’

Symbol of green light

**YORK**

Nick participant, not neutral narration. Theme: relationship of present to past, what is transmitted from 1 generation to next. (1) Gatsby’s personal history (reject parents, association with dan Cody) (2) history of America – new country, free of constraints of past (3) commitment to future – ‘infinite hope’ p7, ‘extraordinary gift for hope’ p8

Less fashionable West Egg connotations of westward Frontier – preserve American ideals lost in sophisticated cities of East. Old, European World: status of imports, Oxford, mansion French model, London shirts. But image is a sham, a mere pretense

Buchanans wealthy drifters – yr in France pursuit pleasure (Nick, Gatsby on war service). TB as racist, sense entitlement, privilege based on wealth

**Chapter 2: 26 – 40**

* **N meets Myrtle Wilson via Tom**
* **Party at apartment in NY – broken nose**

Highway, rail past ‘valley of ashes’, eyes of Dr TJ Eckleburg. 1st met Tom B’s ‘mistress’. 3 shops: Wilson’s garage. Tom bullying weak husband re sell car. Tom tells wife (Myrtle) catch train. In NY, she buys pup, to apartment. N drunk for 2nd time in life. Party: sister Catherine, photographer Mr McPhee and wife from downstairs. Catherine tells neither man ‘can stand the person they’re married to’, Myrtle repeats name Daisy, Tom breaks nose (39). N catches 4 am train

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Striking contrast: ‘valley of ashes’. Eyes – of God (Goerge Wilson). But no traditional spirituality – debauched behavior of parties but eyes see all

Contrast of Myrtle: sensual, ambition, drive. Transformation, new personality in apartment. But diminished impact. Tom’s brutal reminder her place in his life. Callous violence.

**YORK**

Ironic treatment of relationaship New World ideals to Old World values. Advertising hoarding theme of vision: consumerism, materialism taken place of spiritual values, become pervasive

Wilsons: class based on wealth and property. Tom buys Myrtle

**Chapter 3: 41 – 59**

* **Gatsby’s extravagant party – N with Jordan Baker**
* **Developing relationship with Baker**

41 – 56 N observes preparations for extravagant party. N invited. Sees and talks to Jordan Baker. Observations of guests. Discover man in library – not fake. Man asks N about war service – identifies self as Gatsby – leaves for Chicago call. Gossip about Gatsby. Band plays new tune – Gatsby observer (51). Bulter asks Miss Baker speak alone with Gatsby. N sees husband-wife arguments. As leave, drunk drive into ditch, lose wheel.

56 – 59 self reference: ‘looking over what have written …’ N’s normal routine of work. Mid summer remeets Jordan Baker – ‘incurably dishonest’. N tells her ‘rotten driver’ ‘Thought I loved her’ – need to disengage from other relationship. N: ‘I am one of few honest people

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Extravagant hospitality, excess and opulence. Glamorous guests shallow. Nick meets Jordan baker. Idea of reality v rumour – myths about Gatsby. Owl-eyes man in library: surprised by reality. 1st meet Gatsby: smile of faith. Stays back as observer, aloof.

Issues of morality, equity. Interest in Jordan: her lying

**YORK**

Opulent, ostentatious lifestyle – cars, servants, gossip (p45, 46). Importance of trappings of privilege from class-stratified Europe to supposedly egalitarian America

Social elite yet vulgar, contrast between pretension and vulgarity.

Reconstruction of past events dependent on point of view

**Chapter 4: 60 – 78**

* **List of summer party guests**
* **Lunch with Gatsby: his history, ‘big request’**
* **Meets Wolfshiem (World Series), sees Tom and attempts to introduce Gatsby**
* **Jordan Baker’s story: Daisy with Gatsby 1917 but marry Tom**
* **She tells: invite Daisy for tea so Gatsby can meet**

60 – 62 Sunday morning – more gossip about Gatsby. List of guests over summer , including ‘boarder’ Klipspringer

62 – 67 9 am late July Gatsby call by in car: drive to town for lunch. Gatsby asks N’s opinion, tells his story: family dead, inherited money, ‘young rajah’, war stories, Montenegro medal. Gatsby: ‘big request’ – re taking Miss Baker out for tea(66). Police motorcyclist pulls over – Commissioner’s card. ‘Anything can happen ‘ in NY

67 – 72 meets Mr Wolfshiem – story of man shot. Fixed the World Series 1919. N irritation re ‘through Miss Baker’. Sees Tom Buchanan, makes to introduce Gatsby – disappeared

72 – 76 Jordan Baker’s 1st hand account: 1917 Daisy with Gatsby. 4 years later married Tom Buchanan. Before wedding – very drunk. After honeymoon, Daisy dote on husband, chambermaid in car accident with Tom, baby daughter. Heard name Gatsby 6 week ago – remembers officer in white car

76 – 78 as drive Central Park: invite Daisy to tea so Gatsby can come over. Bought house to be near, parties so she might come, N draws Jordan to him

**CLIFFSNOTES**

1st indication Gatsby not what appears. But stories are fictions as reinvent self. Wolfshiem as questionable connection organized crime

Jordan’s story: Daisy discouraged by money. After drunk, make choice, Tolerates Tom’s infidelities. Not jeopardize status, security?

Nick discovers: plan reunite Daisy ‘ought to have something in her life’ (Jordan)

Nick realizes both Tom, Gatsby linked by pursuit of respective dreams – desire to be loved. Kiss turning point for Nick: open to change, susceptible to feelings, emotions of others that others keep out

**YORK**

Gatsby comment re Jordan conflict p70. 3 stories: Gatsby history, murder, Jordan – hints at corruption. Nick doubts Gatsby’s story p65. Nick’s comment on effect of Gatsby’s love ‘came alive’ p76

**Chapter 5: 79 – 93**

* **N visits lit-up mansion – agree to day**
* **Daisy’s visit – N leaves alone**
* **Gatsby shows house – apparent closeness**

79 – 89 As N returns home, Gatsby mansion lit up but deserted. 2 talk about suitable day, Gatsby offers business venture. Next day phone invites Daisy (no Tom). Day: raining, Gatsby man mows lawn, flowers delivered, Gatsby arrive, waits. Daisy arrives. Awkward conversations. N leaves alone as rains (story of ‘period’ roofs). N returns, Gatsby exultant. Takes them to his house: period-copy rooms except bedroom (‘simplest’). Shows and throws pile of expensive clothes.

90 – 93 Gets ‘boarder’ to play piano.N leaves: 5 year wait over – their closeness

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Gatsby’s dream of Daisy fulfilled. Pursuded relentlessly 5 years. 1st glimpse of vulnerability and uncertainty. Overt reminders of wealth. Symbolism: nearly knocks broken clock – trapped in time. ‘a new well-being radiated from him and filled the room’. Daisy also moved. Gatsby revalue everything ‘according to the measure of response’. Symbolism of thrown shirts: Daisy cry – weep not for lost love but for overt display of wealth

Symbol green light: dream now has to change. Gatsby-Daisy seem perfect match (‘push him around pink clouds’)

Nick wonder if Gatsby dissatisfied – in love with idea or vision of Daisy?

**YORK**

American nostalgia for hierarchy of Europe: ‘feudal’ mansion – wealthy superiority, status. Americans as ‘serfs – peasants’ – servitude, obedience to master – willing but not to be openly cast as so

P89 – ‘consumed with wonder at her presence’ – significant word (as at end: 1st encounter with American continent)

**Chapter 6: 94 – 107**

* **Story of Gatsby as James Getz and Dan Cody**
* **Tom and 2 riders at Gatsby’s: tells knows wife**
* **Daisy-Tom attend party. Gatsby: she not like it. Tells: can repeat past**

94 – 97 reporter questions Gatsby – notoriety. Story of James Gatz of North Dakota – as 17 year old, invented new self. Clam digger along Lake Superior. Meets Dan Cody on yacht – worked for 5 years. Died – all millions to newspaper woman. Gatsby not get his $25 000

97 – 107 N: told this much later. N at Gatsby’s: 3 riders visit – Tom. Gatsby tells knows wife – ‘perturbed’. Next Sat Tom-Daisy to big party. N: different atmosphere – oppressive. Daisy-Gatsby dance. Daisy appalled by West egg. As wait go home, Tom aggressively curious about Gatsby (‘bootlegger’). N wait to end for Gatsby: ‘she didn’t like it’. N: ‘can’t repeat past’ G: ‘Of course can’. Gatsby tells: kiss 5 years ago

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Shows how deeply Gatsby’s dream runs. Gatsby mystery cleared away: James Gatz origins – rags to riches story BUT downside: difference ‘new’ and ‘old’ money – seen in visit of 3 riders to Gatsby, Tom-Daisy response to party. Gatsby stunted growth – recreate epic past but unable function in present

**YORK**

Capacity for wonder: ‘incomparable milk’ p107 – echoed at end – ‘breast of new world’ BUT Myrtle’s breast mutilated p131 . Great Gatsby suggest showmanship of stage magicians

**Chapter 7: 108 – 139**

* **N for lunch with Gatsby at Buchanan’s: Daisy profess love. Swap cars as go town. Tom at Wilson’s: take wife away, car promised.**
* **Suite at Plaza: Gatsby challenges: wife love me, not you. Daisy unable declare never loved Tom. Gatsby defeated, sent away by Tom**
* **Crash: Myrtle Wilson runs onto road, killed by Gatsby’s car**
* **Tom and others arrive – comforts Wilson**
* **Outside Buchanan’s: Gatsby waits (protect Daisy) but N sees intimacy**

108 – 119 no Sat lights – history as Trimalchio over. Unfamiliar, unpleasant staff (others sacked). Very hot day. Gatsby phone invite lunch at Daisy’s. N by train: Tom on phone (Wilson about car). Daisy kiss Gatsby: love you. Daughter briefly in with nurse. Testy undercurrent – Tom dumbfounded as seem recognize connection Daisy-Gatsby. ‘To town’: swap cars – Daisy with Gatsby in Tom’s, other 3 in Gatsby’s. Irritated Tom tells 2 of investigations into Gatsby (‘Oxford man!’). Stop at Wilsons for petrol. Wilson pleads re car – needs money to get wife away. N realize Tom not suspected. Agrees send car tomorrow

119 – 129 Tom losing both wife and mistress – speeds. Argue re go movies: instead to suite at Plaza Hotel. Drink whiskey. Very hot. Hear wedding downstairs. Tom questions: Oxford, then ‘make love to your wife’. Gatsby: ‘wife not love you, loves me’. Tom: ‘love me when married, love now … spree..always come back’ – Daisy: ‘revolting’. Daisy pleads: ‘can’t say never loved Tom’ but says she is leaving him. Tom accuses Gatsby of ‘common swindler’, bootlegger. As Gatsby defends to Daisy, she ‘draw into self’, all courage gone. Tom sends 2 off home: ‘little flirtation over’. N remember: birthday. Tom exultant

129 – 131 young Greek principal witness at inquest: to garage, Wilson tell wife locked up. Michaelis return later: argue, she run onto road. Death car not stop

131 – 135 Tom’s car stops: Wilson wailing. Witness tells policeman: big yellow car. Comforts Wilson, then leaves

135 – 139 at Buchanan’s, N refuse go in, reject Jordan. Tom to call cab. Gatsby in shadows: N intense dislike. Daisy driving – swerve avoid car other direction, refuse stop. Want protect her Tom brutality. N reassure, sneaks back: sees 2 in ‘natural intimacy’. Gatsby refuse leave with N

**CLIFFSNOTES**

All paths converge forcefully and fatally. Hot, oppressive weather. Gatsby fully exposed: myth, illusions gone. Outside house, alone. Only has dream, holds on at all costs – fails against Tom’s hardness.

Tom wins: enraged by double loss, laughs off Gatsby, orders to leave.

Daisy: love Gatsby to get back at Tom

Symbol of death by car: what it represents

Nick’s emerging conscience as refuse Tom’s invitation

**YORK**

Daisy as poor mother (one more possession). Tom’s class distinctions: Gatsby ‘bring groceries’, ‘Mr Nobody from Nowhere’

Nick’s awareness of weak future 30th birthday p129) contrast earlier Gatsby

**Chapter 8: 140 – 154**

* **Dawn: Gatsby tells true story of ‘take’ Daisy before leave for war**
* **After war, Daisy not want wait: marry Tom**
* **Tells: return after war – destitute. N: ‘worth whole damn bunch’**
* **Jordan and N dump each other**
* **Michaelis with Wilson: fixated on yellow car**
* **Wilson to house: shoots Gatsby and self**

140 – 142 dawn hears Gatsby home: refuse flee. Tells Cody story – pretense over.Daisy 1st ‘nice’ girl but he penniless. Let her believe he same strata, ‘took her’ one night

142 – 143 surprised by own love. Held her day before leave

143 – 144 his success in war. Despair in Daisy’s letters. Wanted life now: Tom Buchanan. Letter when Gatsby at Oxford

144 – 147 to N, admits: ‘might have loved him … just personal’. To her hometown Louisville as honeymoon: destitute. Tells gardener not to drain pool. As leaves, N: ‘you’re worth the whole damn bunch’

147 – 148 at work, Jordan Baker phone: going away, offer come town but N unable

148 – 152 backfill night of accident: Michaelis stay with Wilson all night – tries to comfort-distract but fixated on yellow car – she ran out to speak, he murdered her. Had told her: not fool God, sees everything

152 – 153 Wilson’s movements: to Gatsby’s house

153 – 154 Gatsby to pool. Chauffeur hear shots: red in water, also Wilson’s body

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Brutal end to life of idealism. Gatsby refuse acknowledge illusion is over (as look for cigararettes). But then, for 1st time, Gatsby confronts as tells real story. Trapped by lack money. As Nick works in city, realizes shallowness of ‘polite society’ – rejects Jordan Baker

Wilson on ‘eyes of God’

Gatsby death as rebirth – no reason go on p153. But 1 last chivalrous gesture – killed instead of Daisy

**YORK**

Nick’s affinity: ‘you’re worth..’ Ambivalance towards wealth: p142

**Chapter 9: 155 – 172**

* **Look back after 2 years: N alone on Gatsby’s side**
* **Father arrives – his pride in son. Only 4 at cemetery**
* **Memory of home: Westerners unadaptable to East. Splits with Jordan**
* **Encounter with Tom – money protects**
* **On Gatsby dock: pursuit of green light doomed to fail. But still strive**

155 – 158 look back after 2 years: Catherine protect reputation of sister. N on Gatsby’s side – alone. Daisy-Tom gone. Wolfshiem letter: unable.

158 – 165 father arrive. ‘Boarder’ phone – re tennis shoes. Day of funeral, N to Wolfshiem office: tells how started Gatsby in business. Father’s pride in son (photo of house). Gatsby’s daily routine and resolutions. Only minister, N, father at funeral

165 – 166 at cemetery, man from library arrive:

166 – 169 memory of return back West from college, Christmas – winter outings. All from West – unadaptable to East? Had quality of distortion – like El Greco. N decide return: resolve with Jordan 1st: angry, half in love, sorry – but leaves

169 – 170 N sees Tom on street, tries avoid. Asks what told Wilson. Sees as careless people whose money protects

170 – 172 N leave house. Final walk around Gatsby house. Aware of new world before man. Green light on dock already behind him. Even though eludes, we still pursue ..

**CLIFFSNOTES**

Ugly side of American dream. Gatsby had achieved: money and so on. Nick ‘on Gatsby’s side, and alone’. People shallow, callous who took advantage eg Klipspringer tennis shoes

Father: also impressed by possessions. Shows itinerary. Reflections on Tom-Daisy rich as ‘careless people’

Green light: more reached for dream, more retreated from real

**YORK**

Nick written a story of West, fate of American ideals, mythical state of limitless possibilities

Grren light – at a distance retained magical potency. Preserved same values of hope

**NOTES**

**What is ‘great’ about Jay Gatsby?**

Tragically obsessed with a youthful love affair

Hero-worship

JG defines self by European values – affects lifestyle of Old World aristocrat. But traces of boy from Midwest

Anti-hero in literature of time

**What kind of book is GG?**

Fitz letter to publisher: want book be extraordinary

Ongoing popularity, film 1926, 1949, 1974

* A love story – a man’s obsessive desire for woman has lost and tragic consequences of that desire
* Social satire – mocking follies of conventional social life – shallowness, hypocrisy, greed of US after WW1
* Critic Trilling 1945 argue: meditation on fate of American ideals in modern world

**AMERICAN IDEALS**

Literary critic Lionel Trilling argued b1945 overarching concern novel is condition of America in early 20th cent – fate of American ideals. Class distinctions: Buchanan v Wilson . Self-determining individual – regimented during war, subject Prohibition in peace. Contrast: Gatsby image presented to Daisy and self-sufficient adolescent James Gatz. Concluding vision: Dutch sailors – Frontier new start

**THE AMERICAN DREAM**

2 variant definitions: (1) ideal – sense of wonder and limitless possibility, embodiment of human potential, free from any limits set by past experience. This aspect in Jay Gatsby that Nick Carraway admires unequivocally

(2) materialistic version – creating one’s own self equated with getting rich. Gatsby has recreated an ideal self, shed past, abandoned parents (just as America jettisoned European history and Old World values in 1776). But tainted by criminal means of attaining evident wealth.

Symbol of ending: Dutch sailors’ vision of ‘a fresh, green breast of the new world’ (living and nourishing) reduced to ‘green light’ on Buchanan’s jetty (artificial marker of rich man’s property)

For Fitzgerald, success in material terms – acquisition of trappings of wealth – inescapably means failure in terms of ideal

Not just rich who sacrifice individuality, freedom to acquire money, property – even George Wilson

**THE FRONTIER**

Has a psychological reality even after physical space to explore exhausted

Nick East to seek material success – found unbearable, returned Midwest write book – connotes authentic America who values old-fashioned yet retain integrity – embodied by Gatsby’s father Henry C Gatz – regarded by son as failure.

Gatsby’s enormous capacity for hope places him ultimately in idealistic tradition of American Dream

**DESIRE AND THE SENSE OF PURPOSE**

For Nick, Gatsby’s greatness lies in his capacity for hope and strength of his desire – Daisy immediate object. But not enough – ‘his dreams .. had gone beyond her, beyond everything’ (p92). Knew ‘when he kissed this girl …his mind would never romp again like the mind of God’. (p107)

Contrast: intensity Gatsby’s desire with apathy, cynicism of those around. Even Daisy sees no promise, purposeless, drifts, restless but without direction: in early 20s, complains ‘been everywhere and seen everything and done everything’ (p21)

But Gatsby’s quest ends in tragedy – murdered in case mistaken identity. Was he mistaken to pursue transcendence, especially as Daisy so unworthy? Nick retains belief: ‘you’re worth…’ AND despite ‘…30 and thinning hair..’ finds purpose in own life, devotes self to creative task of writing story of JG

**VISION AND INSIGHT**

Beyond obvious and given, transcendent vision, capacity to envisage possibilities

Image of Doctor TJ Eckleburg – disembodied eyes looming over ‘valley of ashes’ – George Wilson mistakes for eyes of God – but not all-seeing. This world is godless, no caring, no justice

Man in library with owl-eyed spectacles – looks scholarly, convention of wisdom. But limited vision – expected fakes, amazed by reality ?? PW: this man is regarded favourably

**CODES OF CONDUCT**

Ambivalence: live cautious, disciplined existence (offers security) or indulge in passionate, unruly life (intensity of experience)? How best to live one’s life? Honesty often lacking: Jordan cheats at gold, Wolfshiem fixed World Series, Gtasby’s ‘old sport’ seems invoke fair play but a spurious affectation

**TECHNIQUES  
THE NARRATOR**

A narrator who a participant, but more spectator than actor – complex point of view. Gatsby filtered through Nick. Gatsby becomes both a man and an archetype, standing for America

**DIALOGUE AND THE SCENIC METHOD**

To avoid monotonous, self-conscious or insistent narrator (evident in opening commentary) – uses set piece dramatic reconstructions of series of linked scenes. Eg symmetry of parties: Myrtle’s apartment chp 2 – Plaza Hotel chp 7, Gatsby’s mansion chp 3 – chp 6. Nick reports dialogue without comment – reader draws own conclusions

**CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES**

Eg uses cuts to make transitions from scene to scene without obvious continuity – eg chp 4: Gatsby’s cat TO cellar lunch with Wolfshiem TO Plaza Hotel and tea with Jordan

**SYMBOLISM**

Eg shirt: social class, cosmopolitan sophistication

Cars: symbol of social mobility, large, flamboyant signifying superiority of driver

Fitz uses ironically at end, when Gatsby’s aspirations shattered by events, ‘He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky … and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was’

**INTRICATE PATTERNING**

Of language: eg colours green, white, gold

**CHARACTERISATION**

Novel concerned with way things appear from a particular point of view

Nick dominant but also others: Tom’s view of Gatsby or Henry C Gatz of his son

Nick says is scornful of Gatsby but also admits admires him intensely

Implies character difficult to ‘read’: Daisy’s voice, Tom’s ‘cruel body’, Jordan’s ‘jaunty’ bearing, Gatsby’s smile

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**THE JAZZ AGE AND THE LOST GENERATION**

1920s period of pleasure seeking and reckless exuberance. Post WW1 lost generation: powerless, life is pointless. Feelings of loss and emptiness.   
Novel TGG reflect life without purpose, of restlessness, dissatisfaction, drifting. Pervasive ennui that makes Gatsby’s capacity for hope such a rare quality

**ADVERTISING AND THE MASS MARKET**

Gatsby’s act of self-creation can be seen as new packaging, shift from Gatz to Gatsby a change of brand name, mansion and parties as strategies of marketing. Creating a unique product, not for mass consumption but for Daisy Fay.

**CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION**

How this became a measure of social status. Tom so wealthy not need work. Team of polo ponies. Gatsby has mansion, lavish parties

**PROHIBITION AND ORGANISED CRIME**

Suggestions this principal source Gatsby’s wealth, the core of corruption within his lifestyle. Represented by Meyer Wolfshiem – legitimate power only by TB’s ‘Nordics’ – only route to prosperity for other racial and cultural groups is crime